



PRESS RELEASE

For Release: March 20, 2008
EMAIL/FAX to: Media

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The Columbus Human Rights Commission is pleased to announce that Sondra Bolte has been named the recipient of its 2008 William R. Laws Human Rights Award. Ms. Bolte was honored at the Commission's annual dinner on April 10, 2008.

Ms. Bolte received several nominations from the community which cited her many accomplishments in the area of human rights. After reviewing the letters of nominations, Commissioners determined that Ms. Bolte met the Laws Award criteria in advancing the goal of human equality in the community. The nominees for the Award should have made a significant contribution by doing one or more of the following: 1) improving relationships among all peoples; 2) increasing the sensitivity of one group toward another group; 3) educating people to the barriers or eliminating the barriers facing people of color, women, persons with disabilities, religious minorities, or others who have been treated inequitably because of prejudice; or 4) using existing means or creating new safeguards to protect the rights of others. The Commission selected Ms. Bolte based upon work cited by her nominators who nominated Ms. Bolte because of her human rights work in all four categories. One nomination letter noted that Ms. Bolte helped initiate and facilitate community "Face to Face" dialogs to discuss issues that divide people. Ms. Bolte was also cited for work in helping organize the Columbus community breakfast on Dr. Martin Luther King Day prior to the Mayor taking on the event's leadership. A lifetime member of the NAACP, Ms. Bolte helped organize the first Gay/Straight Alliance meetings in Columbus and in her role as G/SA co-facilitator, she helped advance change in the human rights rules and regulations to include



additional types of discrimination including age sexual orientation or gender identity. Ms. Bolte has served on the board of United Way's Family Services and has served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. She was critical in the conception and success of Columbus Area Aids Action to create educational opportunities and to bring awareness to the forefront in Columbus. Ms. Bolte helped organize and lead the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbus, Indiana and helped start and lead the local Inclusive Community Coalition.

Past recipients of the award include J. Irwin Miller, Madelynn Smith, Rev. Duff Green, Rev. Charles Sims, Larry Whaley, Rev. John Bean, Ted Marston, Richard Stoner, Bill Barton Larry Snyder, Barbara Wrighthouse, Gwen Wiggins, Charles Imel, Joseph High, Mayor Robert Stewart, Barbara Stewart, Lee Hamilton, Jim Henderson, Benjamin "Mickey" King (posthumously), Juana Watson and The Honorable Mayor Fred Armstrong.